NATURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRESS REPORT

THIRD QUARTER FY 2006, APRIL – JUNE 2006

The Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse

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Acronyms

AWF	African Wildlife Foundation
ANMIC	Activities Not Managed in Country
BIOFOR	Biodiversity and Sustainable Forestry
CBJ	Congressional Budget Justification
CI	Conservation International
CKM	Communications and Knowledge Management
CoP	Chief of Party
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
EGAT	Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade Bureau
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Foreign Assistance Act
FY	fiscal year
GCP	Global Conservation Program
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
LPA	Bureau of Legislative Affairs
NRIC	Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse
NRM	natural resources management
NRMO	NRM Office
OPIN	Online Presidential Initiative Network
SFPGA	Sustainable Forest Products Global Alliance
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
ST	Sustainable Tourism
WCS	Wildlife Conservation Society
WfP	Water for the Poor

WCCD   World Congress on Communication for Development

USAID   U.S. Agency for International Development

USFS IAA   U.S. Forest Service Inter-Agency Agreement

SUMMARY

This document serves as the Natural Resources Information Clearinghouse's (NRIC) progress report for the third quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2006, the 15th quarter of operation (April through June 2006). It details the NRIC products and activities for this quarter and describes tasks performed to support the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Natural Resources Management Office (NRMO). It also summarizes NRIC project planning, monitoring, and reporting activities and projects likely activities for the next quarter. In the last section, the report summarizes financial information.

As NRIC moves toward project completion in March 2007, the chief of party (CoP) worked with the USAID cognizant technical officer (CTO) and NRMO director to wind down the program. NRIC administrative staff provided budget projections and estimates for the remainder of the project. USAID agreed to fund the program "status quo" until completion. However, project payments will come in increments to anticipate changes to program needs and possible staff changes.

The NRIC CoP and technical staff met with USAID and consultants to discuss the transition of the NRIC databases to a secure future home after completion of the NRIC project. NRIC provided technical specifications to NRMO staff and contractors such as the manager of the NRM/Forestry portal based at Sandia Labs in New Mexico. No decision has been made yet, however, to transfer the existing NRIC databases and web resources. Regardless, NRIC staff continued to maintain NRM web sites and updated online databases to track NRM projects and activities. The NRIC webmaster posted several new reports to public sites.

During the third quarter, NRIC staff helped produce several communications products for NRMO, including technical reports and communications materials. For example, NRIC staff completed a draft report titled, *Issues in Poverty Reduction and Natural Resource Management*, for the Land Team. NRIC also retained an attorney/writer to draft a background/issues paper about biodiversity conservation and governance. For the Biodiversity and Forestry Teams, the NRIC biodiversity and forestry technical specialist helped produce the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) 118/119 report for 2005. NRIC staff also updated and printed Sustainable Tourism training materials based on field programs in Africa in February 2006.

Staff changes:
- The information manager left NRIC to work for AmeriCorps
- A senior editor joined the NRIC staff.

This report provides further details in seven task areas:
Task 1: Reports, publications, and research
Task 2: Activity and project tracking
Task 3: Web maintenance and management
Task 4: Information management
Task 5: Planning
Task 6: Conference, training, and communications support
Task 7: NRIC project planning, monitoring, and reporting

Task 1: Reports, publications, and research
NRIC assists the NRM Office and technical teams to research, write and produce reports, case studies, brochures and other informative documents.

In the third quarter, NRIC staff helped NRMO technical teams complete several reports. Before printing, each report receives a formal approval from the team sponsor, followed by review and approval from the Bureau of Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA). Reports worked on during the third quarter include:

- ***Combined Section 118: Forestry Report and Section 119: Biodiversity Report.*** The near-final version of the combined 118/119 report was drafted and circulated in NRMO for review. NRIC staff worked with members of the Forestry and Biodiversity Teams to identify and select final photos to be included in the report. All sections of the report were drafted. The full graphic layout version was completed. NRIC's staff editor reviewed all text. The layout version was circulated within USAID, and comments from most USAID staff, including regional bureau environment representatives, were integrated.

- ***Biodiversity and Forestry Team Datasheets for "Activities Not-Managed in Country (ANMIC)".*** NRIC drafted ANMIC data sheets for Forestry Team initiatives (Sustainable Forest Products Global Alliance (SFPGA) and U.S. Forest Service Inter-Agency Agreement (USFS IAA) and three partner organizations for the Global Conservation Program (GCP) Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Conservation International (CI), and African Wildlife Foundation (AWF)).

- ***Natural Resources Management and Poverty Reduction Report.*** NRIC staff worked with the Land Team to complete a draft report based on a series of presentations delivered in 2004-2005. In June, NRIC completed a draft version of the document and submitted it to NRMO and LPA for review.

- ***Conservation and Governance.*** NRIC retained a lawyer/writer to prepare a draft of a Conservation and Governance report. A first draft report was completed in June for submission to the Land Team for review and comment.

- ***Water Reports and Factsheets***. During the past quarter, the water technical specialist was successful in generating 26 country water profiles used in an interagency (Department of State and USAID) FY 2007 planning process. The water technical specialist initiated discussion with the NRMO Water Team about updating the water obligations process, including Internet-based data gathering and a substantially expanded annual report format. They also completed initial data-gathering for the global fisheries assessment. With the NRIC webmaster, the water technical specialist took over from the information manager during this period in responding to NRMO/Water Team information requests. They updated one fact sheet used as a general outreach tool.

Task 2: Activity and project tracking
Under Task 2, NRIC collects data on NRM-related activities and expenditures, tracks field support provided by the NRM Office, and provides analysis and reporting based on these data.

Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act
Obligations data was updated by the information manager on an as-needed basis for discussions concerning the water strategy being written in response to the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor (WfP) Act of 2005. Discussions were still ongoing at the end of the quarter about how to adapt the Online Presidential Initiative Network (OPIN) water reporting framework to meet the needs of the ten-year reporting effort under this Act of Congress. Initial discussions regarding an Internet-based reporting system have stalled, largely due to a recent moratorium on new reporting systems.

During this quarter, the information manager responded to requests by members of the Water Team and USAID/Africa for the latest data detailing USAID's total water obligations for FY 2000 to FY 2005, estimated obligations for FY 2006, and WfP obligations for FY 2003 to FY 2006, for the WfP report and strategy paper for the U.S. State Department, respectively.

In addition, both the water technical specialist and information manager responded to information requests by the Water Team for reporting data for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)-relevant USAID activities.

Task 3: Web maintenance and management
NRIC designs, produces, and maintains web sites and pages for the NRM Office.

NRIC's webmaster continued to maintain web pages for the NRMO on three different web sites: the public web site, the NRIC web site and the EGAT Intranet. At the request of NRIC's CTO, a report summarizing NRIC's web activities in support of the NRMO was submitted. The report includes descriptions and purposes of web sites as well as some minimal user data statistics on sectoral pages on www.usaid.gov.

Public web site
NRIC's webmaster continued to provide support to NRMO by submitting updates to LPA for USAID's public site, www.usaid.gov. Modifications were predominantly made for the Water sector, along with some minor edits to the Biodiversity, Forestry, and Land Management pages.

During this quarter, NRIC's webmaster and water technical specialist restructured some of the content for the Water sector. As a result, several individual pages were retired. Specifically, content for the *Case Studies* and *Success Stories* pages were consolidated into one page. The *Technical Publications* page also was revamped to incorporate content from the *Environment Notes* and *Brochures, Booklets* pages. In addition, one new page on *USAID Partners in Water Resources Management* was created and posted to the live site. To date, there are 11 pages for the Water Sector.

In addition, one new Section 508-compliant PDF of the Congressional Final Report for FY 2005 on Water Activities was submitted to LPA for posting.

Minor modifications to the Biodiversity, Forestry, and Land Management pages consisted mainly of modifying a few modules as well as adding links to search USAID NRM projects available through www.nric.net.

NRIC's water technical specialist and webmaster are currently developing content that explains USAID's approach to Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) by technical sub-sector, and will make arrangements to have them posted to the live site in the next period.

NRIC web site
During this period, NRIC's webmaster continued to update and maintain the site and add all materials from the Sustainable Tourism training conference in Arusha, Tanzania, onto the NRIC web site. Pages include *Overview*, *Course Schedule*, *Core Delivery Team Bios*, *Participants*, *Introductory Remarks by DAA Jackee Schafer*, PowerPoints for all of the core module presentations and sidebar presentations by outside experts, and a virtual library to share documents among tourism practitioners. Additional updates and modifications have been made to various pages as well, and factsheets created for the April 2006 Department of State Exhibition on Sustainable Tourism were also posted to the site.

In addition, bi-monthly WebTrends reports for the site were submitted to NRIC's CTO for the periods of February 1, 2006 – March 31, 2006, and April 1, 2006 – May 31, 2006.

USAID Intranet
During this period, NRIC's webmaster continued general maintenance of the Intranet web pages. In particular, minor edits were made to include updated staff directory information for the Biodiversity and Water Teams as well as the *Biodiversity Code* page.

In addition to general web maintenance, two Newsflash articles for the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture and Trade (EGAT's) Intranet were submitted to EGAT webmaster for posting. They highlighted the USAID Sustainable Tourism training event that was held in Arusha, Tanzania, and the Sustainable Tourism communications e-forum.

Task 4: Information management
NRIC acquires, organizes and archives information about USAID natural resources projects and related cross-sector activities. Also, it distributes information, lessons learned, and other tools over the Internet.

In the third quarter of FY 2006, NRIC updated 26 projects and added five projects to the NRM Online Library, bringing the total number of projects to 578. NRIC also added 133 documents to the library, bringing the total number of documents to 4,063. The number of images remained the same (380).

During this period, a 508-compliant and accessible PDF of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) report was submitted to CDIE/DEC as well as NRIC's partners. Additionally, a CD version of the Sustainable Tourism Training Participants manual was submitted to CDIE/DEC.

NRIC also responded to an information request for documents on inland freshwater fisheries in Africa from the WorldFish Center/Egypt.

NRIC CoP and technical staff met with USAID and consultants to discuss the transition of the NRIC databases to a secure future home. NRIC provided technical specifications to NRMO staff and Dr. Rose Hessmiller, Manager of the NRM/Forestry portal based at Sandia Labs in New Mexico. No decision has been made yet, however, to transfer existing NRIC databases and web resources.

Task 5: Planning
Under Task 5 NRIC supports planning and special project activities within the NRM Office and teams.

The NRIC team provided no significant planning activities during the fourth quarter.

Task 6: Conference, training, and communications support
Under Task 6 NRIC prepares materials and provides logistic support for conferences, meetings, workshops and training activities. Also produces communications and outreach materials for the NRM Office and teams.

Sustainable tourism
Training manuals and participant handbooks developed for USAID's February 2006 Sustainable Tourism (ST) training course were revised and updated to reflect content-as-delivered, and 15 copies of each were reproduced for archives and distribution to course presenters. Follow-up and close-out activities for the training course, including hotel invoicing and correspondence with participants and trainers, were completed.

NRIC developed a poster, five fact sheets, and a bookmark advertising the ST web pages on USAID's sustainable tourism activities for a Department of State Earth Day Exhibition on Sustainable Tourism. A modified version of this presentation was also displayed at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Sustainable Design Exposition on the National Mall in June.

NRIC provided organizational support for a summer speaker series on Sustainable Tourism and Development Communication sponsored by the World Bank, the UN-World Tourism Organization, and USAID that will be delivered in July and August.

Other Communication Products
The Biodiversity and Forestry technical specialist drafted and distributed an updated version of the GCP brochure for partners to review.

Outreach materials in the form of a postcard providing information on USAID's FY 2004 biodiversity annual report (119 report), and the Biodiversity Guide were produced for the Biodiversity Team.

Task 7: NRIC project planning, monitoring, and reporting
During the second quarter the NRIC CoP worked with his USAID CTO counterpart to plan budget scenarios for the final year of the NRIC contract, scheduled to in end in March 2007. NRIC provided budget information summarizing contributions from each team and estimating spending, or "burn rates" for coming months. NRIC reviewed specific budget numbers for the Water Team, which traditionally pays extra for a full-time Water Specialist. Moreover, the CoP and CTO discussed changes in NRIC staff assignments among teams and suggested shifting Carol Hansen to full-time Land Team duties. By the end of the quarter, the USAID CTO outlined a funding strategy and commitment to maintain NRIC staff and program function until the March 2007 project completion date.

Next Quarter

In the third quarter of FY 2006, NRIC will support technical teams with ongoing and new projects. Important activities include:

- **NRM Office**
  The office-wide communication strategy will be revisited. An office-wide newsletter format-content proposal has been approved by CJ Elron, and development of content is in progress. The quarterly newsletter will feature cross-sectoral and cross-office initiatives to raise the profile of the office and to describe how NRMO projects and activities relate to broader USAID development priorities in other sectors, such as economic growth, democracy and governance, and conflict reduction.

- **Forestry and Biodiversity Teams**
  The forestry and biodiversity specialist will work with the Forestry Team and Biodiversity Team to: (1) finalize the combined forestry and biodiversity annual report, shepherd the report through the review process, and produce a final version for distribution; (2) produce a shorter version of the 118-only report for Congress according to the newly released guidelines for Congressional reporting; (3) print the final version of the GCP brochure; and (4) complete the writing and layout of five to ten new web pages for the USAID.gov web site.

- **Water Team**
  The water technical specialist plans to: (1) review the Congressional Budget Justification (CBJ) for FY 2007; (2) ground-truth CBJ estimated obligations as part of the Congressional reporting process; (3) convert the water obligations records from spreadsheets to a single database; (4) oversee the publishing process for the Land-based Pollution Report for the Global Programme of Action; (5) finalize the NRM Office Communications and Knowledge Management (CKM) Strategy with the NRM/Water Team; (6) complete five facts sheets; and (7) complete three new web pages for the external USAID web site (www.usaid.gov).

- **Land Team (and Tourism)**
  The land technical specialist will work with NRIC's webmaster to complete posting of summer seminar series presentations and readings to NRIC's ST web pages, and a summary document reflecting dialogue at the e-forum that preceded this live speaker series will be produced for the October World Congress on Communication for Development (WCCD) Congress in Rome. NRIC will continue to investigate partnering and co-funding opportunities to support future ST training deliveries in other USAID regions, building on the success of the Tanzania pilot delivery.

  In the next quarter, the NRIC land specialist will continue to work with the Land Team to define and produce relevant communication, outreach, and training materials, including a fact sheet on sustainable agricultural practices in the Sahel. Finally, NRIC staff plan complete the *Issues in Poverty Reduction and Natural Resource Management* report and distribute it by September 2006.